

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. -17. (cancelled)

18. (previously presented) An airlaid composite absorbent web comprising a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent and wherein the particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent material comprise above about 85 to about 98 weight percent of the airlaid composite and the binder comprises from below about 15 to about 2 weight percent of the airlaid composite.

19-21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises less than about 10 weight percent of the ~~web~~ airlaid composite.

23. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim ~~20~~18 wherein the binder comprises thermoplastic fibers.

24. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 23 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are bicomponent fibers.

25. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 23 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are PE/PET staple fibers.

26. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises meltblown fibers.

27. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises elastomeric fibers.

28. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 27 wherein the elastomeric fibers comprise a polymer selected from the group ~~including~~ consisting of styrene-isoprene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene-propylene-styrene block copolymers, polyurethanes, elastomeric polyamides, elastomeric polyesters, elastomeric polyolefin homopolymers and copolymers, atactic polypropylenes, ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers, single-site or metallocene catalyzed polyolefins having a density less than about 0.89 grams/cc, and combinations thereof.

29. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the absorbent composite web is between about 50 gsm and about 1500 gsm basis weight.

30. (currently amended) ~~The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18~~ An airlaid composite absorbent web comprising a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent wherein the absorbent composite web comprises about 2 weight percent thermoplastic binder fiber and about ninety eight weight percent particles of coated superabsorbent.

31. (cancelled)

32. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 further comprising at least one of non-coated superabsorbent materials, pulp fibers, synthetic fibers, odor control agents, and other natural or synthetic materials.

33. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the absorbent composite web has an absorbent capacity of between about 15 g/g and about 40 g/g.

34. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the composite absorbent web has a density of between about 0.1 g/cc and about 0.5 g/cc.

35. -51. (cancelled)

52. (previously presented) An airlaid composite absorbent web consisting essentially of a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent; wherein the absorbent composite web consists essentially of less than or equal to about 15 percent to about 2 weight percent thermoplastic binder fiber and greater than or equal to about 85 weight percent to about ninety eight weight percent particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent.

53.-55. (canceled)

56. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the binder comprises less than about 10 weight percent of the web.

57. (canceled)

58. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim ~~57~~52 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are bicomponent fibers.

59. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim ~~57~~52 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are PE/PET staple fibers.

60. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim ~~54~~52 wherein the binder comprises meltblown fibers.

61. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the binder comprises elastomeric fibers.

62. (currently amended) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 61 wherein the elastomeric fibers comprise a polymer selected from the group ~~including~~ consisting of styrene-isoprene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/-propylene-styrene block copolymers, polyurethanes, elastomeric polyamides, elastomeric

polyesters, elastomeric polyolefin homopolymers and copolymers, atactic polypropylenes, ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers, single-site or metallocene catalyzed polyolefins having a density less than about 0.89 grams/cc, and combinations thereof.

63. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the absorbent composite web is between about 50 gsm and about 1500 gsm basis weight.

64. (currently amended) ~~The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52~~ An airlaid composite absorbent web consisting essentially of a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent;

wherein the absorbent composite web consists essentially of about 2 weight percent thermoplastic binder fiber and about ninety eight weight percent particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent.

65. (canceled)

66. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 further consists essentially of at least one of non-coated superabsorbent materials, pulp fibers, synthetic fibers, odor control agents, and other natural or synthetic materials.

67. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the absorbent composite web has an absorbent capacity of between about 15 g/g and about 40 g/g.

68. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the composite absorbent web has a density of between about 0.1 g/cc and about 0.5 g/cc.

69.-70. (canceled)

71. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the absorbent composite web further comprises a support member.

72. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 71 wherein the support member comprises at least one of a spunbond web, a meltblown web, a nonwoven web, a tissue web or a pulp web.

73.-74. (canceled)

75. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the absorbent composite web further consists essentially of a support member.

76. (original) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 75 wherein the support member comprises at least one of a spunbond web, a meltblown web, a nonwoven web, a tissue web or a pulp web.

77. -79. (canceled)

80. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the absorbent composite web has an edge compression of below about 1.2 g/gsm.

81. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 80 wherein the absorbent composite web has a saturated capacity of above about 18 g/g.

82. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 81 wherein the absorbent composite web has a wet tensile strength of greater than about 0.5 g/gsm/in.

83. - 85. (canceled)

86. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the absorbent composite web has an edge compression of below about 1.2 g/gsm.

87. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 86 wherein the absorbent composite web has a saturated capacity of above about 18 g/g.

88. (previously presented) The airlaid composite absorbent web according to Claim 87 wherein the absorbent composite web has a wet tensile strength of greater than about 0.5 g/gsm/in.